such as managing children and other domestic pressures. Women in high tech factories in Asia are organizing across North-South lines with the international support of women’s organizations on health work conditions including women’s special needs, for example on night shifts. And, using the United Nations process, women have brought local concerns to the forefront of the international agenda (Gittler, 1999), analysing women’s needs in each region and connecting to political leaders willing to support a women’s agenda internationally, at times in defiance of fundamentalist and anti-women positions at home.

Conclusion

The women’s movement is actively redefining what is considered to be of public concern, and the way in which politics is made. In the process, spatial borders become blurred, an indeterminacy caused in great part by meshworks, with strategies for the defence of place emerging in sites that can be identified as ‘glocal’, where ideas are born, circulate, change, operate, are negotiated and publicized. The politics of place in this sense is a very practical politics responding to and shaping global change and working with alliances and networks that form around those changes (see Window on the World in this issue for an extensive list of women’s organizations). Networking on its own is not a political act, it is the networks that mobilize and strengthen ‘glocal’ actions through meshworks that are bringing about change. The resulting reconfigurations have been both a response and also part of the vision that women have begun to project based on concepts such as the caring economy, cultural diversity, a sharing of reproductive and productive roles, and a celebration of women’s bodies and creative abilities.

References


The Colour of the Earth: Indigenous women ‘before the law’

MARISA BELAUSTEGUIGOITIA

ABSTRACT Marisa Belausteguigoitia analyses the relation between the notions of place and justice which offers specific scenarios where we may appreciate the complexities of the meaning of place when related to the administration of justice within different and sometimes contradictory systems of jurisprudence inside a nation. She focuses on the collision of national, international and regional conceptions of law regimes administrated in a place: México’s southern border, the state of Chiapas. This journey makes visible the meaning of justice in a place that rubs with the notions of modernity and cultural rights.

KEYWORDS Chiapas; Comandante Esther; guerrilla movement; law; peace march
At the crossroads of place and justice

A couple of questions emerge at the crossroads with the fields of justice and place. What is to be done when a wrong has been committed in a specific place and there are diverse ways of understanding what justice and reparation mean? How do we understand place when, within it, we are faced not only with the overlapping of different gender, class and race regimes, but also with particular ways of applying and understanding justice? What becomes of justice when places are no longer read as unitary and homogeneous scenarios for citizenship and administration of rights? What is the place of women ‘before the law’? How is this place symbolized? After the spectacle of horror witnessed on September 11 and its consequences, one cannot help reflecting on the meaning and relation of two concepts: justice and place.

One of the reflections and analyses has been that the bombing was just another manifestation of the multiple wars held through history between the East and the West, modernity and tradition, Eurocentric culture and its ‘others’, law and cultural rights, Islam and Christianity, globaphiles and globaphobes. The opposition and resistance to the dominance of modernity led by Eurocentric discourses is not new. One of the reflections and analyses has been that the bombing was just another manifestation of the multiple wars held through history between the East and the West, modernity and tradition, Eurocentric culture and its ‘others’, law and cultural rights, Islam and Christianity, globaphiles and globaphobes. The opposition and resistance to the dominance of modernity led by Eurocentric discourses is not new.

I want to draw attention to a social movement which not only resists globalization and modernity but promotes a struggle that resists both of them, with the appropriation of the benefits of globalization like technology and the promise of equal citizenship. This movement is the Zapatistas, the liberation movement placed geographically on the southern border of Mexico. The movement emerged in resistance to globalization and its impositions and legitimated its struggle through the use of its technologies and discourses.

Place-based struggle of the Zapatistas

The Zapatista rebellion was born from the claim of justice and dignity for indigenous people with the demand for the right to be both Indian and Mexican. What is more modern than the will to belong to a nation? The Zapatistas claim that to give justice to the indigenous people in Mexico is to consider them Mexican citizens, but also to recognize their specific marks of difference as identity. One of these specificities was sustained by Zapatista women. They called on the government and their community to meet specific rights not only in terms of the national constitution but also in terms of the elimination of gender-biased practices inside their communities and inside the nation. The Zapatista indigenous struggle fights to preserve a terrain of ethnic, cultural and juridical difference grounded inside the Mexican nation.

The Zapatistas emerged on 1 January 1994, the same day that the NAFTA agreement between Mexico, Canada and the US came into effect. They presented themselves as masked indigenous guerrillas. The Zapatistas declared war on the Mexican nation in January 1994. The translation from bombing and fire to words that shake and burn happened during the first month of the war. The Zapatistas were well known by their ‘war of words’. One of their spokespersons, Subcomandante Marcos, became famous through his writing. His communiqués were considered a ‘bombardment’ of words that shocked the cultural and symbolic foundations of the Mexican identity, based on the discreet inclusion and exclusion of the indigenous people.

Shortly after the declaration of war made by the Zapatistas on the government, a round of negotiations began. A set of signed agreements was reached after two years of negotiations in February 1996 called the San Andrés Accords. They represented an effort by both parties, government and rebels, modernity and tradition, Spanish and indigenous languages, to understand modernity and citizenship as a promise of equal justice that involves ‘the other’. Rebels and government signed in February 1996, after two years of dialogue, the first agreement regarding autonomy and cultural rights for indigenous people. This document included cultural rights and justice, diversity and citizenship, and the granting of full citizenship and cultural, political and economic autonomy.

What is at stake here is the density of the presence of modernity in specific places. Being modern...